



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,679th Concert

Anna Kijanowska, *pianist*

Presented in cooperation with the
Embassy of the Republic of Poland

June 8, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937)

Mazurkas, op. 50, Book I (1924–1925)

Sostenuto; molto Rubato

Allegramente; poco vivace

Moderato

Allegretto

Szymanowski

Preludes, op. 1 (1899–1900)

Andante ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Szymanowski

Mazurkas, op. 50, Book III

Tempo moderato

Allegramente; vivace; con brio

Szymanowski

Preludes, op. 1

Andante ma non troppo

Lento, mesto

Szymanowski

Mazurkas, op. 50, Book v

Moderato

Animato

Allegretto dolce

Allegramente; vigoroso

INTERMISSION

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Piano Sonata no. 3 in B minor, op. 58 (1844)

Allegro maestoso

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Largo

Finale: Presto non tanto

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–1969)

Piano Sonata no. 2 (1953)

Maestoso

Largo

Toccata

The Musician

Hailed by *The New York Times* last year as “an excellent young Polish pianist,” Anna Kijanowska has distinguished herself internationally as a recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist. A devoted promoter of the music of Karol Szymanowski, she has recorded all of his mazurkas on a CD that was recently named by Adrian Corleonis of *Fanfare Magazine* as “superior to any other interpretations that came before or after hers.” Atlanta Audio Society’s *Classik Reviews* called the recording a “revelation,” while *All Music Guide* noted, “Kijanowska’s performances are amazingly virtuosic, astonishingly charismatic, astoundingly empathic, and completely compelling.”

Past and upcoming engagements include solo recitals at Carnegie and Merkin Halls in New York City, the Chopin Society in Bangkok, the French Institute in New Delhi, the North-West University in South Africa, and Saint Bridget’s Church in London as well as Polish embassies and consulates in New York, Washington, DC, and Tokyo. Kijanowska has been the featured soloist with orchestras in Poland and Ukraine (piano concerti by Lutoslawski and Gorecki), and chamber music performances at Hunter College in New York, at the State University of New York in Fredonia, and at the Life-Music-Now Center in Berlin. As a chamber musician, she has collaborated with such eminent performers as Charles Castleman, Diane Monroe, and Basil Vendryes.

Kijanowska began her musical education in Poland at age seven, and gave her first recital one year later. In 1992 she entered the Szymanowski Music Academy in Katowice, where she studied with Józef Stompel. After receiving a master of music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from the Music Academy in Wroclaw, she was awarded a scholarship to study during the 1996–1997 academic year with Madeleine Forte at Boise State University in Idaho. Kijanowska holds a doctorate and a master of music in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York, where she studied with Sara Davis Buechner, Byron Janis, Marc Silverman, and Mykola Suk. Kijanowska is currently on the music faculty at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and she is a former faculty member of the Las Vegas Music Festival in Nevada and the Levine School of Music in Washington.

The Program

Considered the father of twentieth-century Polish music, Karol Szymanowski is the most important Polish composer to come after Chopin. The evolution of his musical style begins with the late romantic aesthetic, reflective of Chopin; moves through the impressionistic and exotic elements in his middle works; and emerges into a period of “new objectivity” that is marked by a return to a classical approach linked to the discovery of folk material. Szymanowski’s mazurkas are representative of the “new objectivity” period—a post-World War I movement inspired by the rebirth of countries celebrating their reclaimed freedom. Artists and composers of this age sought ways to champion their respective national identities without alienating themselves from contemporary trends. In the mazurka, this idea yielded extraordinary works that incorporated a variety of Polish folk music within an established classical idiom.

The mazurka has evolved over the course of several centuries, beginning with the oldest and most popular dance of the Lowland region of Poland, the *mazur*, also called the *mazurek*. In the seventeenth century, a form of this dance became popular in the courts, and in 1797 Józef Wybicki composed a marching song for the Polish army (then fighting under Napoleon) based on the *mazurek*. This song became Poland’s national anthem in 1926. Szymanowski adopted Chopin’s stylized form of mazurka, adding the distinct style of Highland music, unknown to Chopin. Szymanowski’s opus 50 mazurkas were inspired by his love for the folk music of the Podhale region, an area on the southern border of Poland that lies in the shadow of the highest elevation of the Sudeten-Carpathian Range. While the time signature and form of the mazurkas are common to both composers, the Podhale influence on Szymanowski is characterized by diverse and complex harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic language as well as unique phrase structure, articulation, and texture. The result is a rough, driven character in Szymanowski’s mazurkas.

Composed between 1899–1900, and possibly even a few years earlier, Szymanowski's *Preludes*, op. 1, were his own selections of some of his earliest small pieces for piano. Like his mazurkas, the preludes are influenced formally and texturally by those of Chopin, but they also reflect the young composer's interest in contemporary trends in music. Among Szymanowski's most frequently performed works, these pieces are favorites among pianists and have been arranged for other instruments as well.

Frédéric Chopin, whose music is instantly recognizable for its unique style, influenced the two other composers featured in this program. Well known for his deep affection for his homeland, Chopin derived many of his melodies from Polish dances. A cultivator of smaller pieces, such as ballades, mazurkas, nocturnes, polonaises, preludes, and waltzes, and a master of melody, he was not at home with the sonata form. Nevertheless, he composed three sonatas, two of which have become part of the standard repertoire. Perhaps due to criticism he received for his opus 35 sonata, Chopin made an extra effort with opus 58. He was able, particularly in the first movement, to achieve a wider-scale continuity of theme and development and to rise to the challenge of conquering the classical form. Written several years before his death, the entire work conveys nostalgia and profound sadness.

Born into a musical family, Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz began learning piano, violin, and theory from her father at age five. Her older brother was a pianist, and often accompanied her in performances. She composed her first pieces at age thirteen, attended the Warsaw Conservatory of Music, and studied philosophy at the University of Warsaw. In the 1930s Bacewicz did what all the young Polish composers were doing at the time — she went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. She became the first Polish female composer to receive international recognition for her compositions while maintaining an active performing career and a family.

A highly awarded composer, Bacewicz had a significant output of successful pieces, including works for solo piano, chamber music, and symphonic repertoire. Though she was the principal violinist in the Polish Radio Orchestra, she was also an excellent pianist, and performed the premiere of her *Piano Sonata no. 2*. Written in 1953, at the height of the Stalinist repressions in Poland, the sonata does not show an overt response to the oppressive situation, but it ends with a lively toccata that shows the influence of Polish folk dances and may be seen to take the place of a political statement.

Program notes by Anna Kijanowska and Danielle DeSwert

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Judith Ingolfsson, *violinist*

Vladimir Stoupel, *pianist*

Music by Hallgrímsson, Ravel, and Schubert

June 15, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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